

NO BEST AGE FOR MARRIAGE SAYS MARY JOHNSTON

—:—"Marry to Please Yourself;" the First of the Three Great Eugenic Laws—:—

By MARY JOHNSTON.

MARRY to please yourself, that's the first eugenic law. Yes, marry to please yourself—not the family, not the neighbors; not the uncle who may die and leave you something if you please him; not your set, not tradition, not Mrs. Grundy, not anyone nor anything else.

Marry for love. Love may be the overwhelming, the absolute passion of Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde. Or it may be less than that, but still love, good, hearty affection, a feeling of hand and glove, of good comradeship and considerable besides. It may be "love me little, love me long." Some temperaments are cool like that. But it is love, liking—not family interest, not money, not business advantage, not anything but the pure, the natural drawing each to the other of one certain man and one certain woman.

This doesn't mean that you aren't to listen to advisors and weigh what they say. Your reason and your heart will tell you there isn't a real common sense as against a false common sense. It doesn't mean that there isn't in some cases a duty to others and a law of kindness that may keep you from marriage even though you love. It doesn't, in short, mean blind selfishness.

Love Wisdom and Worldly Wisdom.

Nor, nowadays, does true marrying mean just bodily impulse without mental or spiritual discrimination. A time was when that might have been. But the human spirit is advancing beyond that. Marrying means that two worlds are coming together and that they may beget other worlds, and that all are going to live in one system that we call the home. Now worlds are physical, emotional or psychic, mental and spiritual.

It is imperfection if a man or a woman meet on one only of these planes and for the rest remain strangers or even foes. So, when we love, let us, if it be possible, love where it is wise to love—love wisely. Sometimes that wisdom and worldly wisdom happen to coincide. Sometimes that wisdom is not worldly wisdom at all. When that is the case, then worldly wisdom must stand aside. A higher wisdom has the right of way.

The voice within is the voice that all things taken together, most truly counsels, and the voice to which in the end you must listen. If it does not tell you rightly nothing else can. If it says to a young man and woman, "Through the length and breadth and height of things we belong together!" then the probabilities are that they do so belong, and that cosmic values are being furthered by their marriage.

Exaggerating the Conventions.

Now cosmic values have a way of imperiously cutting across local and temporary values set up by any mundane group. In the end the cosmos wins. But the conflict may cause much suffering. Time out of mind, in this matter of marriage, the immediate, the temporary, the imagined, the conventional, have barred true love and true happiness, and true service through love and happiness. We in America think we do not interfere here, but we do! Perhaps not quite as much as in certain other vast social groups, but quite sufficiently. Just at this moment ethnic, class, economic, religious and social unlikelinesses—every one of them more fancied than real—are receiving a fresh airing.

We are not going to say that conventions have no importance. They have a relative and partial importance. But we exaggerate them. We give them precedence when precedence belongs elsewhere. In the world view, precedence belongs almost every time to honest love.

"I weigh not true love by weight of purse,

And beauty is beauty, in every degree."

And says Shakespeare, "Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds . . . But bears it out even to the edge of doom."

We in America think we don't sin against youth and love and freedom and the world view, but we do.

The Second Eugenic Law.

Unlikeness in the flags under which our parents have lived, differences in class, in wealth, in occupation, in inherited dogma and creed, all, in the world view, go down before the deep, inner sanc-

Editor's note: Taking direct issue with Gertrude Atherton, who last week urged that all wives of "old American stock" should feel obligated to have from three to five children in order to preserve the predominance of the "Nordic strain" in this country, Mary Johnston, who is herself a descendant of exclusive lineage, here frankly and vigorously advances the opposite view. This is the third contribution to the remarkable forum which is being conducted in these columns upon the subject of Love, Marriage and the Modern Woman. Mary Roberts Rinehart, who introduced the series with "The Best Age for Marriage—19 or 23?" will proceed next week with her development of this theme including the story of her own married romance.



MARY JOHNSTON

Member of noted old Virginia family; author of "Croatan," "1492," "Silver Cross," "To Have and to Hold," etc.

Mary Johnston is an aristocrat of birth as well as of letters. As a writer she has been called the possessor of "the eye that sees and the tongue that does not fear to speak."

"To Have and to Hold" is perhaps Miss Johnston's best known novel. Her others include "The Long Roll," "Cease Firing," "Silver Cross," "The Wanderers," "1492," "Croatan." As an historian she is noted for "Pioneers of the Old South" in the Chronicles of America Series published by the Yale University Press.

Residing near historic Warm Springs, Virginia, where Washington and Jefferson once came to take the baths, Miss Johnston remains in the environment of her distinguished lineage and family connections. She is descended from Peter Johnston, who in 1727 arrived in Virginia from Scotland, and behind him the Annandale clan of Johnston, seated in Dumfriesshire since William the Conqueror. On her mother's side she comes from a Scotch-Irish family which traces itself to one of the citizen soldiers in the siege of Londonderry in 1688. She had many ancestors and kinsmen in the Revolution and the Civil war. Joseph E. Johnston, the celebrated confederate general, was her uncle.

tions of the heart and mind. What, in the world view, a married pair is to do is to be happy and to garner experience, to make life a wise, lovely and powerful thing, and to manifest it and themselves in their offspring.

The third eugenic law is, Don't marry unless you love. Single life is neither a crime nor an unhappiness. There is the world to love. There are goodness, truth and beauty to find and serve, vast universes of mind, soul and spirit. Single life need not in the least be a frustrated life. That is a monstrous thought that is dying from the world. Children of the mind, children of the soul and spirit, are often to the world and to ourselves the most loved, the most significant, the most valued

and valuable of children. Moreover, we live on, we perpetuate ourselves in these children, just as surely as the married ones perpetuate themselves in the children of the body.

But I am speaking now primarily for the marrying ones, and the marrying ones in the United States. So we return to them.

Is the Youth of Today a Step-Down?

There arises in our day a great clamor over the ways and the manners and the actions of American youth, male and female. Perhaps the accent is upon the latter—so different does she seem from her kind of yesterday and the day before. But, if you will observe, the male, too, has his differences.

Are they fatal, these unlikenesses to the past? I think not. On the

whole, they may mark a little more evolved, a somewhat saner and a fairer condition of things. Of course there are faults. Were there none the parent generation would find itself too utterly removed from its offspring. But is the young man—is the young woman of today, with all her faults upon her head—really a step-down from the generation immediately behind them, or from the mid-Victorian behind that? It would take a revelation that we have not to make me believe it!

Courage, independence, candor, ability to take one's own part and face realities, love of the open air and of justice, a widening mental and social outlook—such traits as these seem to me to be taking stronger hold. Welcome to them! They are good things for wives as for husbands, for mothers as for fathers.

On the whole, it seems to me the young woman of today, cigarettes and so on to the contrary, is as wife and mother the superior of the young woman of yesterday.

Welcome also the freer association of boys and girls, youths and maidens, men and women in their 20s and 30s, in play and work, in school and college, athletics and cultural societies, business and professions and homes, work days and holidays, week days and Sunday. Welcome their wider understanding of each other, their comradeship, their equality! It is better—eugenically better—that the man and the woman should have a larger range of selection than has been the case in the past.

Tending Toward Late Marriage.

Taken by the large, the present conditions surrounding courtship are as superior to those that ruled us in mid-Victorian days as our general occidental method of free choice is superior to the oriental method of giving a veiled bride to a man she has never seen. Biologically and economically we are tending toward later marriage. But, within limits, there is no best age. Woman keeps her bloom much longer now, particularly her mental bloom—and marriage is becoming more and more mental and spiritual.

It is better that the exclusive, the perfervid sex appeal of the past should give way to wider harmonies, in which sex still sounds, but in which now there is found a growing richness of notes and chords of a shared humanity. It is better that frankness of speech in matters of sex should be with us rather than the ancient, fearsome suppressions.

Do we really think that we were cleaner—we ourselves cleaner—in that day when as children and young folk the simple verities of nature were withheld from our knowledge as though they were serpents and arsenic? When there were all kinds of bluebeard closets?

"You may ask questions about this and about that, but never, never, never must you intelligently question and be intelligently answered just here!"

It didn't at all seem to matter that we had to live, and this was a basic part of life. And so we were driven to find out guiltily what should have been given us, cleanly, freely, at the first sign of awakened interest. No! I think the young folk today are cleaner than we were.

Public Servitude and Underhand Mastery.

It is better—eugenically better—that boy and girl should come to manhood and womanhood, as they are doing today, with a sense of equality. He will not be master, she will not be a restive and rebellious servant, indemnifying herself for her public servitude in many an underhand piece of mastery. The promise for their children is better now than it has been.

Let us strive for the intuitions of the future, rather than rest so supinely with the smaller lights of the past! Man is not an ocean and woman a tributary stream. But woman, too, is an ocean. Man is not a sun and woman a moon, but woman, too, is a sun. Our day glimpses this, and a future day shall see it far more fully. Man and woman are interpenetrative luminaries.

Ethnic unlikeness, class and caste difference, economic and religious and social differences—we hear the alarm bells ringing here in the United States that, if they were founded for anything, were not founded for those alarm bells, but for the wedding bells of difference! "Expanding and swift, henceforth, Elecents, brad, adjustments, turbulent, quick and audacious."

A word primal again, vistas of glory incessant and branching.

A new race dominating previous ones and grander far . . .

Americans and Inter-marriage.

We have had from many sources lately a lot of assertion as to the vast superiority in the destinies of America of the "old" Anglo-Saxon strain, and of the necessity somehow of keeping this authoritative, powerful and "pure." I don't see it.

America is a great place, but America is a part of the world. The world is a greater place than America. Folk who have lived in America for 100, 200, 300 years are very estimable folk, but folk who have lived in America only 50, 25, 10, five or one year, living the rest of the time in another part of the earth, are also very estimable folk.

Persons whose parents and grandparents spoke the English tongue are splendid persons, but persons whose parents and grandparents spoke other tongues are also splendid persons. The Anglo-Saxon hasn't all the history, all the culture. The Nordic races haven't it all. The European hasn't it all.

Why under the sun—and under the American Eagle, too—shouldn't there marry on this soil English and Russian, Scotch and Italian, French and Hungarian, Welsh and German, Irish and Greek, Scandinavian and Spaniard, Jewish and Gentile?

"All Races Are Compounds."

As Americans—by every canon of our own best concept of ourselves—we are concerned with a huge and thorough synthesis, not with perpetuation at the cost of all others of any one particular stock. Much of the talk today is preposterous. For a trouble-breeder there is nothing in the world to compare with the individual or the group that sets up a staff against the whole and cries, "Here is the banner! Come bow down to it!" As for "pure races" there are no such things. All races are compounds.

For a long time the greater number of men and women are going to marry within their own particular group, ethnic, social, economic, religious, etc. Propinquity, habit, opportunity, a number of considerations, make for that. There's no danger at all of a wholesale, mechanical, too hasty admixture.

The very point is that there shall not be a mechanical and wholesale bondage anywhere. "I enslave you and you enslave me and so we shall all be enslaved!" But what is wished is freedom, full freedom of choice, man and woman. And if that freedom leads to marriage outside any specified group—still it is freedom, and a loving belief that deep within us there is, in these things, a deep guidance.

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Next week: "Choosing a Husband: Three Principles of Marriage." The Stultifying Stranglehold of the Woman—Who Holds Her Family too Close. By Mary Roberts Rinehart.

THE HONORABLE TONY

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mischief! Slip the bolt behind me, Daisy."

With a last touch on her hair, he was gone. He pulled the door to behind him noiselessly, and stood leaning against it for a moment with bowed head. Silence—a faint patter of feet—the heavy grating of the bolt driven home. He raised his head.

"Good girl!" said the Honorable Tony.

He swung across to the table, felt for the matches and lit the lamp. A little wind passed through the quiet room, bringing a distant murmur of voices, and far off footsteps coming nearer. The flame in the lamp flickered and burned brighter, and the flame that danced in the eyes of the gentleman reclining in the long chair flickered and burned brighter, too, though they were discreetly lowered over a two-month old paper from Singapore. Even when the footsteps were on the rickety stairs he continued to read—even when the knocks rang out, he did not lift those dancing eyes. He flipped over the first page of the Singapore paper, and lifted his voice in welcome, leavened with surprise.

"Come in!" called the Honorable Tony to those who stood in darkness. And they came in. First there came a small plump, swarthy gentleman in immaculate white linen. He had small, fat hands adorned with three superb emeralds. About his head was a turban of fine red silk, pierced by a brooch in which crouched another emerald large as a pigeon egg. In one fat little hand he held a pair of white kid gloves and a small handkerchief badly crumpled; in the other a swaggar stick of ebony banded with smooth gold. Behind him came 10 gigantic figures in incredible

green uniforms. Lanterns swung from their great paws and in the gilded holsters at their waists the mother-of-pearl handles of the famous automatics gleamed like the milky way.

The British adviser rose easily to his feet.

"Your majesty!" he saluted with precisely the correct inflection of gratified amazement.

"Excellency!" His majesty's accent was more British than the Honorable Tony's, but he purred in his throat, which is not done. "We were alarmed by the good Ghundi's report of your health. You suffer?"

"Oh, Ghundi's overdone it," protested the Honorable Tony, all courteous regret. "I'm no end sorry that you've had all this bother. Nothing in the world the matter but a rather stiff nip of fever; I was going to turn in another minute, and sleep it off."

"We will drive off this pestilential fever with three good rubbers and four good drinks," his majesty suggested. "Ahmet will fetch your coat. It is in your room? Ahmet!"

The Honorable Tony moved more swiftly than Ahmet. He laid one hand on the handle of the bedroom door.

"I do honestly feel too rotten bad to last out even a hand," he said pleasantly. "I'll be fit as a fiddle in the morning and entirely at your majesty's disposal; but for tonight I'm going to ask you to excuse me."

"But tonight we will most certainly not excuse you." His imperial majesty replied amiably. "No, no, on the contrary. Tonight excellency, we are quite through. Stand aside, I beg you. When Ahmet fetches your excellency's boots, he will also fetch your excellency's lady."

The Honorable Tony gave a shout of astounded delight.

"My hat!" he cried. "But this is simply gorgeous. Just what are you going to do if I don't stand aside?"

"Shoot you where you stand. Come, come. We are over patient."

The Honorable Tony sighed beatifically.

"Oh, come now, shooting me down in this casual way—what do you think the British government's going to make of it?"

"Nothing," replied the British Government's loyal ally blandly. "In due time the proper authorities will be informed that you were lost overboard on an expedition after crocodiles, and your body was not recovered. I do not believe that the loss will afflict the government so deeply as you imagine."

The Honorable Tony's manner changed abruptly to cold insolence.

"And that's enough," he said. "Take your army and be off. Remember that we're in the twentieth century, not the Adelphi Theater."

"We are in Asia," said His Imperial Majesty. "Life is good, Excellency, and death, a long and dreary affair. The woman is not worth it—a gutter rat out of the music halls. Stand aside, I beg!"

"My mother was from the music halls," said the Honorable Tony. "I have half a mind to mop up the floor with you before I turn in."

"You are a brave man," said His Imperial Majesty equably, "and a fool." He turned to the black and emerald giants. "Attention!" The giants stood very straight.

"Ready!" said Bhakdi softly. The pearl-handled automatics flashed.

"Aim!" said Bhakdi, with a flick of the handkerchief toward the

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